

NJPW Dominion 6-11: John Cena Wishes He Could Spam Moves Like This

Dominion 6:11

Date: June 11, 2017

Location: Osaka-Jo Hall, Osaka, Japan

Attendance: 11,756

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Don Callis

So I've been trying to mix things up a bit with my style and this has been a requested show. Somehow having something up ten days late is a good sign for me, though given that I hadn't planned on watching the show until about a week after it aired, this might not be too bad. The main event here is Kenny Omega vs. Kazuchika Okada II in a rematch from their non-six star match at Wrestle Kingdom XI. Let's get to it.

As usual, keep in mind that I only watch a little bit of New Japan every year so I'm not going to know all of the details coming in. This is much more of an outsider's perspective, though I do keep up with the company to a certain degree.

Pre-Show: David Finlay/Shota Umino/Tomoyuki Oka vs. Hirai Kawato/Katsuya Kitamura/Tetsuhiro Yagi

These are Young Lions, meaning....well I think you can tell by the name. Finlay (who isn't a Young Lion) is the only name I recognize so this could be quite the mess. Yagi and Shota strike it out to start and WHY ARE THEY ALL WEARING BLACK TRUNKS??? Come on it's already hard enough to keep track of who is who in the first place (yes I'm aware it's probably something like they have to earn their individuality or something) and now this.

It's off to Finlay (thank goodness for the red trunks) vs. Kawato with the latter hitting a missile dropkick for two. Oka comes in for a slam and we hit something like a choke. Oka and Kitamura, the big power guys

trade shoulder blocks, with both guys reeling back in pain for a nice touch.

Kitamura gets in a spear and gutwrench suplex but a chop puts him down for two. The tag brings in Finlay to get beaten up by...I think Kawato? Would a name on the trunks really be that much to ask? Finlay gets triple teamed and caught in a Boston crab but everything breaks down on the save. An uppercut gives Finlay two on Kawato and a Stunner is enough to put him away at 7:41.

Rating: C-. Totally watchable match here, assuming you don't mind the lack of characters or needing picture ID's to tell everyone apart. Then again it's just a pre-show match so I don't think they're going for anything mind blowing here. Worry not though as you can feel the main event being over rated from here so I think the mind blowing part is going to be well covered.

Before we wrap up the pre-show, Callis promises seven stars in the main event. Unless Trent Seven is involved, let it go already.

As is tradition, the opening video goes on for the better part of a Ken Burns documentary and shows all the people in the major matches without a word of English to be found. That's not meant as a criticism as this is primarily for the Japanese audience and the English commentary is usually quite good at explaining the basics.

Tiger Mask/Tiger Mask W/Togi Makabe/Yuji Nagata vs. Hiroshi Tenzan/Jushin Thunder Liger/Manabu Nakanishi/Satoshi Kojima

At least they're in different looking gear. Nagata and Nakanishi, the two ancient ones, start things off and I actually checked to make sure I wasn't watching this at half speed. Nakanishi chops away and refuses to be whipped into the ropes but gets dropkicked in the leg. A spinwheel kick to the head drops Nakanishi and it's off to Tiger Mask (non-W I believe, meaning the older one) for some kicks.

The younger version comes in to help but Nakanishi is right back with a running chop to the original's throat. Liger comes in to one heck of a reaction and a tilt-a-whirl slam before it's off to Kojima. The rapid

chops in the corner don't seem to have much effect but a cutter drops Tiger Mask....yeah I'm pretty sure it's the one without the W. A double takedown allows the tag to Nagata (again with no W), who is quickly chopped down by Tenzan.

Yuji grabs a suplex and it's off to Nakanishi vs. Makabe for the big exchange of power clotheslines. Everything breaks down and it's a parade of hard shots to the face until Makabe blasts Nakanishi with another clothesline. Makabe's top rope knee drop (The King Kong knee drop, which should be quite the heel move as I'd bet on this being a GODZILLA crowd. Unless they dislike him destroying their cities all the time, in which case Makabe might be the top star in the company. I'm so confused.) for the pin at 7:04.

Rating: C. I actually liked the first match a bit better but this was still more than good enough. The opening part really was bad though as Nagata vs. Nakanishi really did seem like it was the slowest thing I've ever seen. At least you could tell who everyone was here and that's a major upgrade over the pre-show match.

Never Openweight Six Man Tag Team Titles: Gauntlet Match

Los Ingobernables de Japon (Bushy/Evil/Sanada) are defending but it's Bullet Club (Bad Luck Fale/Yujiro Takahashi/Hangman Page) vs. Chaos (Yoshi-Hashi/Toru Yano/Tomohiro Ishii) to start. I've been watching New Japan for a few years now and these teams seem to have been feuding the entire time.

Yujiro has a parade of good looking women in various stages of limited clothing with him, making him one of the better parts of the show so far. As usual, Yano has merch to hand out/sell, which is a gimmick that gets a little old but still has enough charm. Page kicks Ishii in the face to start and we hit the forearms that have no effect but wrestlers still do them because of strong style or fighting spirit or whatever they call standing there and growling at the moment.

It's off to Yujiro vs. Hashi with the former biting the hand. Hashi's running Blockbuster takes over and the monster Fale runs over the rest of Chaos. Fale and Ishii brawl into the crowd (rare around here) with Bad

Luck leaving Ishii down but not doing anything to keep him down because he's not that bright. Page gets two off a bridging fall away slam (Doesn't that make it just a fall slam?) and everything breaks down again.

A reverse 3D gets two on Hashi as Fale has gone back outside to beat on Ishii again. Yano gets the hot tag and immediately removes a turnbuckle pad as he starts making me think he's the Japanese Santino Marella. That earns him a beatdown (Someone not liking a comedy guy? Really?) but his partners come in for the save, including Ishii clotheslining Fale to the floor. Yano is right back with a double low blow on Page and Takahashi for the pin on the latter at 6:01.

Suzuki-Gun (Zack Sabre Jr./Yoshinobu Kanemura/Taichi) are in third with Yano sending Zack into the exposed buckle for two. Kanemura grabs a bottle of whiskey but Yano tries another low blow. That just earns him a very British looking rollup from Sabre for the pin at 8:20 total. Taguchi Japan (Ricochet/Juice Robinson/Ryusuke Taguchi) are in fourth and it's a triple hip attack to start. It's funny for some reason you see.

Ricochet and Robinson charge into Sabre in the corner and it's a baseball joke with Robinson's cannonball acting as the pitch. I'm really hoping that's something being lost in translation as it feels like a No Way Jose gag (not the worst thing in the world). Sabre's partners remember they're in the match and beat on Taguchi, including a soccer style kick as this is one of the weirdest serious matches I've ever seen.

Everything breaks down again with Ricochet and Robinson beating the heck out of Sabre, including an elevated shooting star press for two. The rapid alternating continues as Robinson gets triple teamed. You know if any of these teams ever got on the same page, they'd clean house. A Buzzsaw Kick gets two on Juice....and Taichi takes off his pants. Kanemura is a proponent of the pants and mists Taichi by mistake (I'm sure).

Pulp Friction (Unprettier) ends Taichi at 15:37. We're not done yet though as Sabre grabs an Octopus Hold on Robinson during most of Los Ingobernables' entrance. The champs destroy everyone else as this is already looking one sided. Robinson gets elbowed down and a backsplash

gives Evil two. A leg lariat drops Sanada and the hot tag brings in Ricochet to really clean house like only a Kentucky boy can.

Unfortunately he does that stupid spot where he throws two opponents together, forcing one to DDT the other. Ricochet gets clotheslined to the floor so it's Taguchi with another hip attack. The Tower of Doom puts everyone down again, including Ricochet catching Evil in a sitout powerbomb. Ricochet actually tags Taguchi, who walks right into a Backstabber for two. Everything breaks down again (I'm getting tired of typing that) and it's Taguchi putting Bushi in an ankle lock. Sanada makes the save with a dragon sleeper though and Bushi adds a middle rope Codebreaker to retain at 23:56.

Rating: C. This was messier than it needed to be and while the last bit was good, it felt like they were just throwing all these people together for the sake of throwing them together. From what I can tell, these titles change hands faster than Impact changes their story about why their audiences never grow. Having this many people in a row wasn't the best idea but there was some good action to help carry things.

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Tag Team Titles: Young Bucks vs. Roppongi Vice

The Bucks are challenging and my goodness the amount of praise they get from commentary is unreal. They're already the Ring of Honor Tag Team Champions and the Superkick Champions because....I have no idea really. We're ready to go after the long weapons check and it's Berreta vs. Matt to start things off.

The first superkick connects less than thirty seconds in and the Bucks take over in a hurry. A double clothesline drops the challengers and Berreta follows them out with a big running flip dive. Nick grabs Rocky for an apron bomb, followed by driving the back into the post a few times. This is probably as close to psychology as you're going to get in a Bucks match so enjoy it while you can.

Back in and Berreta gets double teamed as the Vice roles have been reversed since their match at Wrestle Kingdom. Matt grabs a Sharpshooter of all things as a whole new branch of 90s offense is tapped. A wheelbarrow cutter gives Nick two but Matt charges into a double stomp in

the corner to give the champ a breather. Rocky is back on the apron, only to have Matt pull him down for a powerbomb onto the ramp. I'm glad they did something else as you can only have someone stay down for so long.

The Swanton to the elevated Berreta on the floor gets two but More Bang For Your Buck is broken up. A Shining Wizard into a piledriver stuns Nick for two but Berreta is spent. Romero finally comes back in for a quick Strong Zero but Nick dives in with a Swanton for the save. Berreta actually makes the tag off to Romero for some house cleaning, including a double hurricanrana and double clothesline. Everything breaks down again and it's a superkick to Romero, followed by a German suplex onto the apron.

Back in and Romero gets caught in the Sharpshooter with Nick adding a slingshot X Factor for a great cutoff. Somehow Romero powers up and dives over for the break. More Bang For Your Buck is countered into a crucifix for two, followed by a small package out of the Sharpshooter for the same. Berreta gets taken out again though and it's the Indytaker into the Sharpshooter to make Romero tap away the titles at 14:13.

Rating: B+. That's pretty easily the best Bucks match that I can remember and SO much of it is due to the lack of superkicks. They were actually having a match here instead of just goofing off and doing all their shenanigans. That makes them even more frustrating: it's clear that they can do something great here with working the back and cutting off the partner but instead they go with the easy stuff and ruining the superkick because it's funny (or something). Very good stuff though and that's amazingly refreshing.

IWGP Tag Team Titles: Guerillas of Destiny vs. War Machine

War Machine is defending but the Guerillas jump them to start and the beating is on in a hurry. Tama hammers on Rowe and gets in a hard clothesline to drop the much bigger man. As is customary, this means a lot of swearing from the Guerillas but it's off to Hanson to show off the real power.

Both Guerillas are stacked up on top of each other for the pounding forearms to the chest. The fans actually seem to like War Machine better

as Hanson gets splashed in the corner. Hanson turns Loa inside out with a clothesline of his own and it's back to Rowe. Loa laughs like the Joker but gets caught in a Rock Bottom (Loa: "OH S***!"). Everything breaks down again with Hanson getting the better of it and doing his screaming running clotheslines in the corner.

Loa spears Rowe and hits....something like a swinging reverse DDT on Hanson. Tama and Rowe slug it out until Loa comes back in with a Blue Thunder Bomb. Hanson is back up and throws Tama at Rowe for a springboard clothesline. Somehow that's only good for two and Loa breaks up Fallout to save the match.

Rowe breaks up a quick Guerilla Warfare attempt and powerbombs Tama, setting up Hanson's top rope splash for a rather close two. Back up and Rowe pops Tama up for something but he pulls Hanson down into a cutter. The referee gets bumped and it's chair time with Rowe getting blasted in the back, setting up Guerilla Warfare (a bad looking elevated DDT) for the pin and the titles at 10:52.

Rating: B-. This company really likes changing its titles at the big shows. That being said, I like both teams as they both feel different enough than most of the people in this promotion. The match wasn't great but it was certainly entertaining, with the biggest problem being that it came after the Bucks match. At least it was a fun brawl, albeit one with a bad ending.

The new champs pose in the chair after the win.

Cody vs. Michael Elgin

Just a way to get them both on the card here. Cody offers a cartwheel to start but Elgin shoulders him down and shows Cody the proper cartwheeling technique (I hear he won the Nevada state title back in 95). Since it worked so well the first time, Cody hits a vertical suplex, only to have Elgin pick Cody up for an eighteen second version. Callis says it was over thirty, meaning that bad timing skills are also a Canadian/Japanese problem.

It's time for the loud chops with Cody in big trouble only a few minutes

in. Cody finally grabs an Alabama Slam for a breather but he tries chopping Elgin in the corner. It's Flair vs. Sting all over again, even capped off by Cody cutting him down at the leg to stay in control. The springboard missile dropkick lets Cody taunt him a bit....so Mike grabs him by the throat for a Rock Bottom. That'll teach him, or at least it should.

Naturally Mike does Cody's taunt right back to him before rolling a few German suplexes. A Blue Thunder Bomb gets two but Cody pulls him down into the Trailer Hitch (modified Indian Deathlock) for little effect. Cross Rhodes are broken up but one heck of a clothesline drops Cody. Elgin tries the apron superplex, only to have Cody slip down the back for Cross Rhodes and the pin at 11:52.

Rating: C+. This was your standard formula match with the power vs. athleticism. That's the kind of formula that is always going to work and there's nothing wrong with having a match like that fill in about fifteen minutes on the card, especially with people who have serious potential like these two. Nice little match here.

Cody wants Christopher Daniels and Okada

IWGP Junior Heavyweight Title: Kushida vs. Hiromu Takahashi

Kushida is challenging after losing the title to Takahashi and then losing the rematch in less than two minutes. He's since won the Best of the Super Juniors Tournament to earn another shot. They start fast with Takahashi trying the Time Bomb but settling for an exchange of forearms to the face. The early slugout sends both guys to exhaustion, which really isn't a good sign in what is likely to be a long match.

They chop it out again with neither getting much of an advantage again. Takahashi sends him flying into the corner with an overhead belly to belly for the first real advantage but he can't follow up. Things settle down considerably but the fans are right there with Kushida. We hit the chinlock on Kushida, which seems rather odd in this promotion. I know they're uses but it's not something that feels right around here.

Back up and Takahashi misses a charge and gets caught in a cross

armbreaker underneath the ropes. It's quickly broken but that seems to have fired Kushida right back up. Kushida actually sets up some chairs and the fans are NOT happy with the idea, only to turn around when he uses one as a springboard for a dropkick against the barricade. Back in and it's time to start in on the arm but Takahashi catches a handspring in a German suplex (anyone who has wrestled Marty Scurll would know to NEVER TRY A FREAKING SPRINGBOARD! UNLESS YOU'RE TAJIRI OF COURSE!).

They head up top with Kushida grabbing a Hoverboard Lock and pulling Takahashi right back down with it. Back to the Future (It's a small package driver with another AMAZING name) is broken up so it's back to the Hoverboard Lock but Takahashi escapes with a hard clothesline. Kushida heads to the apron but takes a cringe inducing (seriously) sunset bomb to the floor.

Takahashi takes him back in for a Death Valley Driver into the corner but puts Kushida on top for some reason. As you might expect, that means a super Back to the Future (thud) for no cover from the spent Kushida. We get the slugout from the knees with Kushida PUNCHING HIM IN THE NECK but both guys go down again. The fans boo Kushida stomping on him so it's the Hoverboard Lock again and Takahashi taps at 19:14.

Rating: A. That's one of the fastest nineteen minute matches I've ever seen. These two were beating the heck out of each other and it was a blast to watch from beginning to end. It felt like they couldn't stand one another and that makes for an entertaining fight. They also played up the story of Kushida trying to claw his way back, which is an awesome story. I mean, it would have been much better if it wasn't just a five month story but points for going with something entertaining.

Kushida thanks the fans but Bushi and Evil come out with the former misting the new champ.

Never Openweight Title: Hirooki Goto vs. Minoru Suzuki

Suzuki, an old man invading, is defending and this is a lumberjack death match, which means lumberjack. Both guys also have stables and we're still in STABLE WARS!!! Feeling out process to start so let's look at the Japanese commentary team instead. Arm cranking goes nowhere so Suzuki

takes him up to the ropes and shoves him in the face a bit.

They start chopping it out with Suzuki rolling outside but being thrown back inside almost immediately. That works so well that they do the same thing with the roles reversed as this isn't exactly deathtastic so far. Goto is sent outside again and now the lumberjacks get into it, allowing Suzuki to hit a running boot to the face. Suzuki drops a piece of the barricade on him and it's more Suzuki-Gun interference.

Back in and Suzuki keeps up the hard strikes and some arm holds. Another brawl on the floor has Jushin Thunder Liger nearly jumping off commentary to fight Suzuki, drawing easily the loudest pop of the match. Goto scores with a lariat back inside and it's time to forearm each other really hard again. They're tough like that you see. Suzuki gets the better of it but throws Goto into the referee, drawing in the lumberjacks for the brawl.

Yoshi-Hashi hits a flip dive onto everyone else and it's time to fight over chokes. The GTR (a spinning forearm to the chest into a backbreaker) gets two with a guy named Taichi coming in and pulling the referee out. One heck of a chair shot from Taichi knocks Goto out and a jumping Gotch Style piledriver retains Suzuki's title at 16:01.

Rating: D+. As is almost always the case, I just don't care about these matches. I don't see the appeal of hitting each other really hard and turning it into a toughman contest, but that might just be a cultural thing. I need something more to connect to than "He can get hit really hard but THIS GUY can get hit even harder!" That and all the interference got old in a hurry as I have little idea who most of these people are and it's basically just two groups hating each other for reasons not important enough to explain.

Yoshi-Hashi saves Goto from further damage so Suzuki offers a challenge.

We actually recap Tetsuya Naito vs. Hiroshi Tanahashi. Naito defended his Intercontinental Title against Tanahashi at Wrestle Kingdom to complete Tanahashi's downfall but now Tanahashi is back for revenge. In other words, rebel vs. tradition.

Intercontinental Title: Hiroshi Tanahashi vs. Tetsuya Naito

Naito is defending and has damaged the title by throwing it around, leaving the metal broken in a few places. Tanahashi goes right after him to start and they slug it out on the floor in a rare display of aggression from the good guy. Naito sends Tanahashi's bad arm into the post to slow him down but a dropkick sends the champ into the barricade. They slug it out until it's time to go after the arm, which doesn't sit well with the fans.

The announcers actually explain Naito destroying the belt: he thinks there are too many titles and wants it to be retired. That's.....really different and I kind of love it actually. Naito sends him outside and poses, followed by a tornado DDT off the apron. Tanahashi is back in at nineteen (still takes time to get used to) and it's off to an arm lock. Back up and Tanahashi actually SPITS on Naito, which is way out of character for him.

We hit the forearm exchange (actually they do but you get the idea) and a dragon screw legwhip takes Naito down by his banged up knee. Naito tries to bail but gets his leg banged against the apron as Tanahashi is showing extra aggression, which makes perfect sense in a big match. It's too early for the Cloverleaf so Naito goes back to the arm with a pair of dropkicks.

The bad arm gets tied up again but Tanahashi reverses a suplex into a neckbreaker. High Fly Flow only hits mat though and it's time for another big slapoff. Tanahashi has had it though and grabs both arms for a big German suplex for the slowest two I can remember in a good while.

Naito grabs his own German suplex and Destino for two, only to have Tanahashi pop up with the Sling Blade. The High Fly Flow is good for another near fall and you can hear some of the energy go out of the crowd on the kickout. The Cloverleaf goes on with Tanahashi almost turning it into a Liontamer to FINALLY make Naito tap at 25:58 and earn redemption.

Rating: A-. This was all about the storytelling and the leg/arm stuff worked very well. You could feel the idea Tanahashi fighting for everything he could with Naito relying on his normal stuff and not being able to hang in there at the end. It's very similar to the Kushida story

but this was just a hair better from a storytelling perspective, albeit not quite from the wrestling perspective.

We recap Kazuchika Okada vs. Kenny Omega for the IWGP World Title. They had the most overrated match of all time (which was great) at Wrestle Kingdom and now Okada has challenged Omega for the rematch.

IWGP World Title: Kenny Omega vs. Kazuchika Okada

Omega is challenging and has the Young Bucks in his corner. Feeling out process to start (of course, because this is going to be a long one) with Omega taking it to the mat and kicking Okada in the shoulder for a break. Omega can't hit a neckbreaker and gets slammed down, only to block a hilo with raised knees. Neither can hit their finisher early but Okada tweaks his knee on a dropkick. As is so often the case in a main event match.

It's fine enough to knock Omega outside for a flip dive but the knee goes out again. Back in and it's time for the dropkicks to the knee, including a missile version which has Callis calling Omega a world class athlete. That's certainly not overkill based on a freaking dropkick or anything. A Figure Four stays on the knee and they head outside with the knee going into various objects.

At least Omega is smart enough to stay on the knee for a bit before kicking at the back to annoy Okada again. A flapjack drops Omega but Okada can't follow up thanks to the knee. They head outside again with Okada shoving him over the barricade and hitting a running dive. As you might expect, the knee goes out again and Okada can't immediately follow up. Back in and Omega gets caught in an over the back neckbreaker but still avoids the top rope elbow.

Omega sends him outside again and it's a top rope Asai moonsault, followed by a springboard missile dropkick for two. A loud sitout powerbomb gets the same but Okada gets his knees up on a middle rope moonsault. Okada goes up top but blocks the dragon superplex and hits a Death Valley Driver onto the apron. A VERY hard dropkick sends Omega into the barricade and Kenny is dazed. Callis: "It's like being kicked by a horse." Has Callis ever been hit by a horse? I doubt it, but that's better than JR's "Big Show's headbutt is like being hit by a typewriter."

It's table time but Omega can't get him up for the powerbomb (I'm sure Omega nearly dropping him was COMPLETELY intentional and not in any way, shape or form a mistake in this match that has been rated 125% on the star scale). Okada drops him again and hits the top rope elbow for no cover. Instead he goes back up, only to have Omega catch him for a superplex. He crosses Okada's legs before lifting him, which is supposed to add something to it but it's the exact same landing.

The V Trigger (knee to the head) is blocked and Okada rolls some German suplexes into a weak Rainmaker (you know, like it almost always looks) for two. Omega is back up with a sitout powerbomb for his own near fall and both guys are spent. Back up and another Rainmaker is countered into the snap dragon suplex but Okada throws him on top for a dropkick to the floor.

The huge top rope elbow puts Omega somewhat through the table (cracked but didn't break) and it's back inside for another dropkick. Of course the announcers are RIGHT THERE again to tell us how completely and utterly in awe they are of Okada's dropkick. I didn't know if they doing that the first 198 times during the match sunk in or not. Omega keeps swinging from his knees but eats a pair of Rainmakers (perhaps the worst of them I can remember as THEY'RE JUST STANDING CLOTHESLINES!

Okada walks around instead of covering and here's Bullet Club with Cody holding a towel. The Bucks keep him from throwing it in and Omega hits a reverse hurricanrana to get a breather. Omega throws the towel down and charges straight into another dropkick. The fourth Rainmaker is broken up with a loud knee to the face for two (This is REAL wrestling! Not that nonsense trading of finishers that WWE does!) in a great near fall.

The One Winged Angel FINALLY connects but Okada gets his foot on the ropes. It's a very good false finish, though it would have been better (like SIX AND THREE QUARTER STARS) if Omega hadn't turned toward the ropes before hitting it for no apparent reason other than to set up the kickout. Omega does his pose again, allowing Okada to grab the wrist for the fourth Rainmaker of the match. No cover of course as the match is now longer than the Wrestle Kingdom version.

They slug it out again with Okada actually going down (a rare sight in one of these things), only to pop back up with another dropkick (WE GET IT ALREADY! Both the dropkick and how FREAKING AMAZING THE THING IS KELLY!). More knees (I've lost count on how many of those Omega has hit) drop Okada for two and a running version to the back knocks Okada silly. Another One Winged Angel is countered into the Tombstone (Hokey smoke a fresh finisher!) but Okada can't follow up.

Instead he starts screaming but Omega collapses to avoid another Rainmaker. Since that standing clothesline is just SO hard though, Okada stumbles forward and can't get up. They fight over a Tombstone until Omega settles for another knee to the head...as we're told there's five minutes left. Another running knee looks to set up what looked to be a Tombstone but Okada slips out and hits another dropkick. A spinning Tombstone plants Omega for no cover as we fill in more time.

Okada picks him up and gets small packaged in an outstanding false finish. ANOTHER FREAKING DROPKICK puts Omega down with two minutes left. Kenny grabs the ropes to block the Rainmaker with a minute left and another dragon suplex gets no cover. Instead Okada dropkicks him into the fifth Rainmaker (Take THAT John Cena with your five AA's a match. Japan's big names can do it too!) but time runs out at 60:03 (far closer than most hour draws go so points for that).

Rating: A-. I liked the Wrestle Kingdom match better but that's not to say this isn't a great match. The problem here should be obvious: I was so sick of the same dropkicks/jumping knee/RAINMAKER (because putting it in all caps instantly makes it cooler)/Tombstone sequences by the end that they stopped meaning anything to me. Anyone is going to run out of stuff to do by the end of a sixty minute match so I can't blame them for it, but don't act like them doing the same stuff over and over like that again for forty minutes is some amazing, never before seen formula. That brings us to the other big problem.

Meltzer giving this six and a quarter stars is downright laughable. What I'm supposed to believe is that this match is TWENTY FIVE PERCENT BETTER than any other five star match in history. Twenty five percent better than every match in the Steamboat vs. Flair trilogy, than Austin vs.

Hart, than Michaels vs. Undertaker in the Cell, or in any of the roughly 183 tag matches he gave the rating to from Japan in the 90s.

Just....no. Quite literally no, it's not that good. Nothing can be, which is why I rolled my eyes when I saw what he rated the match. There's absolutely nothing wrong with liking a style more than another (I do it, as does every reviewer around, because wrestling is very subjective) but this was some of the worst hyperbole I've seen in a good while. I had a good time watching it but again, it didn't need to be an hour long. You could cut out a good fifteen minutes (like the knee stuff, which wound up meaning NOTHING after about half an hour in) and it's a better match, though still not six and a quarter stars, or really anything close.

Now that being said, yes the match is excellent and an incredible athletic display. They were selling like they were dead at the end to really put over how much they were laying into each other. Okada came off as the star here with Omega not doing the same level of stuff that he was doing back in January (not to say he wasn't working hard but January was a once in a lifetime performance). Great match, but I liked both Wrestle Kingdom and Kushida's match earlier tonight better.

Both guys are gassed and the announcers officially call it a draw and do the standard wrestling thing of comparing it to other matches of the same style over the years. The ending is praised as well, though I'm not sure on that as Okada had him beaten, which doesn't quite set up a rematch very well. There will be a rematch of course but it could have been done better.

Gedo puts Okada over and the guys get a standing ovation.

There was a post show press conference which I won't watch because I don't speak Japanese. The only news though is Cody challenging Okada, who he'll face at the North American debut in early July.

Overall Rating: A-. Let's get the big problem out of the way: this show is REALLY, REALLY long at nearly six hours. If you're going to watch it, fast forward through the entrances and watch it in shifts, which is standard advice for almost all of the big wrestling shows around the world these days. Six hours is just too much to sit through at once and

there's no much of a way around that.

That being said, it's a great show and certainly worth checking out (though you could skip a match or two and be fine). The two big matches are both outstanding and the Junior Heavyweight Title match is even better, making those three matches must see. The tag matches might vary a bit depending on your taste and the gauntlet match could have been cut down significantly (have the teams on the floor or something). The Never Title match is VERY subjective and while it's not my style, I know that kind of stuff has a strong following.

As usual, it's a show I had a good time with but nothing I'm interested in following up on. I'm probably going to increase my New Japan watching a bit going forward, though I'm probably maxing it out at four to five shows a year tops (probably closer to three or four). I probably won't be covering the tournament finals and there's virtually no way I'm doing anything but major pay per views. I'll certainly be doing Wrestle Kingdom (and before people ask me this time) and probably this show plus a few others. New Japan is a lot of fun with some excellent wrestling but them coming to America could be quite a shock for them.

Yes they're popular with their core audience, but there's a VERY big difference between the Japanese wrestling fans and the American wrestling fans. You can wrestle this style and bring in all these other names, but if that style is so successful over here, why does no one but WWE draw more than 5,000 fans a night? Maybe New Japan will be different, but I'm really not sure I see it happening. They could surpass Ring of Honor, but is that really a major accomplishment these days? Anyway, great show, but be ready to fast forward some stuff.

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